Work: The Meaning of Your Life

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Work and Meaning

- We tend to look for meaning everywhere, but not on the job.
- But, we spend the greatest number of our waking hours on the job.
- Is it possible that all of this time is meaningless beyond getting a paycheck?
- *Meaning* is the answer to the ‘what fors’ of life.
- A right view of work becomes a key to a satisfying life.

Work is the Form in Which We Make Ourselves Useful to Others

- Read the title of this slide several times to grasp the importance of it.
- Oftentimes this is not easy to see, especially in a world in which the division of labor is finely segmented.
- Work creates civilization and culture.
  - No work, no food and shelter.
  - Someone doesn't sit down type words on a page, no *Better Call Saul* or *Stranger Things*
- The things we produce are ultimately for someone else.
  - We sell those things to others, thereby making ourselves useful to them.

Work Creates Civilization

- Work places us in the service of others in the creation of civilization.
- Think about the parable of the sheep and goats (Matthew 25:31-46)
  - To feed the hungry, someone has to work to grow food, process it, produce packaging for its transportation, prepare it, and many other steps. All work!
  - To provide water for the thirsty, we need to lay pipes to get drinking water to people, purify the water, manufacture the equipment to do all of this. All work!
  - To care for the sick, we need medical services of various kinds, health insurance, etc. All the result of work!

Work Creates Civilization

- It isn't that only the 'sheep' work. The 'goats' could be working as well, but in jobs on which the Lord does *not* depend. Jobs that destroy rather than create more civilization.
- We also sculpt ourselves by our work.
  - A good example here is the Parable of the Talents (Matthew 24:14-30)
  - Each servant is given a certain number of talents (a sum of money). Those who multiply the talents for the masters are commended.
  - But is commended based on how much they were given. The servant given two talents is treated the same way as the servant given five talents (too whom much has been given…)

Talents Are for Use

- Which brings us back to work.

- Talents are for use, which implies work!
- The talents God loans us enable us to choose the kind of self we sculpt while using them

The Downside of Work

- We live in a fallen world, so work will wound us.
- Technology can would us.
- Being a cog in a machine can be wounding.

*Nothing said here should be taken as a ‘works righteousness’, that can earn our salvation.

What Work Does

- Work is a form of artistry. We create culture and civilization via our work. Any worthwhile work creates something.
- Work molds wilderness into garden, nature into city, disorder into order.
- Work (via trade) provides us with far more than we ever could produce on our own.
- Work joins man with God in the development of the world.